

GUINEA CONAKRY: REFUGEES

29 March 1999

appeal no. 01.05/99

situation report no. 1

period covered : January - March 1999

Given the ongoing volatile nature of this area of West Africa, voluntary repatriation of the current refugee caseload is unlikely. Since the launch of the Appeal (01.05/99) and based on discussions with UNHCR, the Guinea Red Cross Society and the Federation have agreed to increased responsibilities for this operation. The additional requirements cover food and domestic item assistance, distribution and logistical support, telecommunications, and staffing.

The context

The civil wars raging in Liberia and Sierra Leone since 1990 have had serious repercussions on both countries as well as on their neighbours. In addition, civil unrest in Guinea Bissau has also provoked the flight of refugees seeking asylum in Guinea-Conakry. The result is that Guinea-Conakry has been burdened with hundreds of thousands of refugees originating from all three countries.

Approximately 5,000 refugees from Guinea Bissau, 100,000 refugees from Liberia, and 500,000 refugees from Sierra Leone are located in the areas of Boké (in the north), Forecariah (maritime Guinea), Guéckédou, and Nzérékoré.

The situation in Guinea Bissau and Liberia remains unstable, preventing the return of the refugees originating from these countries in the near future. In addition, the civil war in Sierra Leone continues, and will therefore cause ongoing population movements between the two countries.

Latest events

The violent battle for Freetown at the end of 1998 and beginning of 1999 lead to thousands of dead and wounded civilians, and large numbers of internally displaced. Sporadic (but often heavy) fighting continues between the rebels and ECOMOG in the interior of Sierra Leone, leading to massive internal and external population movements.

The Guinea Red Cross Society (GRCS) and the Federation has, based on a request from UNHCR, taken up new and heavier responsibilities regarding refugees in Guinea.

In Boké where 5,000 Guinea-Bissauan refugees are located, the GRCS and the Federation has taken full responsibility for merging 7 temporary sites into 1 new camp, involving camp management, construction, food and non-food distributions, water/sanitation, and health.

In Forecariah where 50,000 refugees from Sierra Leone are located in 10 different sites, both the GRCS and the Federation are responsible for reception of the refugees, assistance in construction, food and non-food distributions, and social welfare programmes.

In Guéckédou where 450,000 refugees from Sierra Leone are located in 92 sites, both the GRCS and the Federation are responsible for social welfare programmes including health education, nutrition, training in public sanitation, water/sanitation, construction of community halls, awareness campaigns for protecting the environment and saving fire wood, and community services.

In Nzérékoré where 100,000 Liberian refugees are accommodated in 42 sites, both the GRCS and the Federation are responsible for distributions to vulnerable groups, social programmes, and repatriation assistance.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The GRCS has reinforced the relief, health, and social welfare departments in order to more effectively co-ordinate activities in the various regions affected by the refugee influx. Local Red Cross branches have mobilised teams of staff and volunteers to be responsible for relief, health, water/sanitation, construction, and social welfare programmes in all refugee operation sites.

The Federation's Delegation in Conakry provides technical, logistics, reporting, and monitoring support to the National Society.

Boké w

In Boké, one Federation Delegate and 7 Red Cross staff are finalising the relocation of the refugee sites. Construction of huts, latrines, garbage dumps and wells are almost complete and a distribution of a two months ration of food is underway.

Forecariah w

One Federation Delegate and 30 Red Cross staff and volunteers are managing the reception of new refugees (registration). 15,000 refugees have arrived from Sierra Leone since January. The GRCS branch volunteers are assisting to build shelters, to distribute food and non-food items, and providing sanitary education and community services.

Guéckédou w

One Federation Delegate and 40 Red Cross staff and volunteers continued the emergency operation in water/sanitation, construction of wells, latrine construction, and garbage collection in 4 sites in the town of Guéckédou. At the same time, in 92 sites the Red Cross branch has started the recruitment and the training of the future 200 health community volunteers for social programmes. At the beginning of April, two Federation Delegates are due to join the team to assist the National Society.

Nzérékoré w

One Federation Delegate and 50 Red Cross staff and volunteers are providing assistance in the repatriation preparation for Liberian refugees. The refugees are provided food, tools, sleeping mats, blankets, and kitchen sets before departure. For the vulnerable groups (50,000 persons), a two month food ration distribution was completed in February and a new round of distributions will start in April. For 20,000 vulnerable people, individual assistance is provided through the social programmes.

Outstanding needs

Since the launch of the Emergency Appeal, the situation in Guinea-Conakry has shifted significantly. The GRCS and the Federation have had to expand their operations beyond what was foreseen in the Emergency Appeal because of the situation in the neighbouring countries. The GRCS and the Federation are now working in four major areas covering 145 different refugee sites. Due to the increased responsibilities, the GRCS and the Federation urgently require additional funding for the

operations in Guinea to cover the costs of non-food items, logistical support and transportation, radio telecommunications, and additional Delegates and Red Cross staff and volunteers. The additional requirements amount to CHF 800,000.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The GRCS and the Federation are working closely and coordinating efforts with UNHCR, WFP and GTZ for camp management, distribution of assistance items, transportation, and social and environmental programmes. Working in collaboration with Terre des Hommes (in Guéckédou), the Red Cross is responsible for a training of trainers programme for social workers in charge of unaccompanied children.

According to an agreement between the GRCS, the Federation, and the Ministry of Health, the Red Cross is responsible for the referral system concerning refugee health.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Given the volatility of the region, it is likely that the refugee situation in Guinea will worsen in the near future. Since the GRCS and the Federation began work in Forecariah and Guéckédou with very limited external funding, donors are requested to support the extended programmes in Guinea with cash contributions. Complete project documents for Guéckédou and Forecariah are also available upon request. For further information, please contact Mr Geir Andreassen at the Secretariat, tel. ++ 22 730 44 71, e-mail: andreass@ifrc.org.

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GUINEA, LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE						
APPEAL No. 01.05/99			PLEDGES RECEIVED			29/03/99
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL				12,959,383	01/01/99	
NETHERLANDS - RC/GOVT		958,000	NLG	694,998	08/03/99	LIBER
SWEDISH - RC		145,000	SEK	24,114	15/01/99	IVORY
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				719,112	CHF	
KIND AND SERVICES (INCL. PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0.00	CHF	
NOT REQUESTED IN APPEAL						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0.00	CHF	